

Development of TRI National Training Conference and Outreach Efforts

Federal Agency: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION,
OFFICE OF INFORMATION ANALYSIS AND ACCESS
TOXICS RELEASE INVENTORY PROGRAM DIVISION

Funding Opportunity Title: Development of TRI National Training Conference and Outreach Efforts

Announcement Type: This is the initial announcement of this funding opportunity.

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OEI-TRI-2008-001

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.612

Dates:

The closing time and date for receipt of proposal packages is March 31, 2008, 11:59 p.m., EST. All proposals as, described below in the announcement, must be submitted electronically through <http://www.grants.gov> by that time and date. If an applicant cannot submit its proposal electronically thru grants.gov, please contact Peggy Bagnoli at (202) 566-1230 or Bagnoli.Peggy@epa.gov for alternative submission methods—proposals submitted thru alternative methods must also be received by the closing date and time specified above. Proposals submitted or received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. Final applications will be requested from the successful applicant whose proposal has been evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award.

Summary:

This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits proposals for projects that will provide key non-federal audiences with an opportunity to attain a greater understanding of Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) data and other related data and information. This announcement is consistent with the purposes of the TRI as stated in the Environmental Protection and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) 42 U.S.C. 11023. EPA believes that the best way to promote greater understanding of the TRI data and other related data and information is to provide financial assistance for a project to determine the most effective means of increasing awareness and providing access to TRI and other toxic chemical information to other non-federal organizations. For example, EPA believes that public health organizations are in a better position than EPA to more effectively communicate pertinent TRI information to their members or constituents in clinics, health research, and local governments.

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), the Agency is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants that show how to improve the access, the presentation, and the use of TRI data and other related data and information to the public. Proposed activities should include, but are not limited to, providing training to interested stakeholders (such as the annual TRI National Training Conference), developing a clearinghouse for non-federal research and analysis for TRI and other toxic chemicals, and providing a mechanism to support other non-federal organizations to conduct studies on how to use TRI and other toxic chemical information.

TRI data and information should be made available in a number of ways to assist the widest range of users. The clearinghouse concept, as discussed in more detail in Section 1.D.III below, is intended as a

“first-stop shop” that provides information and analyses on how to use TRI and other toxic chemicals. The clearinghouse should provide non-federal organizations with an overview of the different ways in which the TRI data are used, and as such include a description of all programs, activities, and analyses that use the TRI data.

Funding Award:

The total estimated funding under this competitive opportunity is approximately \$1,000,000.00 over a five year period. The Agency anticipates funding an initial one year budget period at approximately \$200,000. EPA will partially fund each budget period and will consider funding the balance of budget requests contingent upon satisfactory progress as certified by the EPA Project Officer, the availability of funds and EPA priorities. EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement from this announcement, subject to availability of funds and the quality of proposals received.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

Since its implementation 20 years ago, the TRI program has achieved remarkable gains in data processing efficiency with Toxic Release Inventory-Made Easy CD (TRI-ME CD) and Toxic Release Inventory-Made Easy Web (TRI-ME Web) and also gained acceptance as the world leader in community “right to know” programs. However, the TRI Program recognizes that many people are unaware of the TRI database, and that current users of the TRI database remain unaware of the full utility of TRI data. This solicitation is aimed at addressing the need for financial assistance that will enable non-federal organizations to provide access to TRI and other toxic chemical information to other non-federal organizations so they can help facilitate and manage activities that will further promote analysis, understanding, and use of TRI and other toxic chemical data to prevent pollution, improve environmental performance, and reduce the hazards/risks associated with toxic chemical releases within their communities.

The objective of the cooperative agreement(s) expected to be awarded under this RFP is to provide funding in support of surveys, studies, investigations, training/demonstrations, educational outreach and research and analysis as they relate to environmental information and the release of toxic chemicals as reported to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). The ultimate purpose of this cooperative agreement is to educate the public on how to access and more effectively use TRI information, including information about other toxic chemical releases. The purpose of this cooperative agreement will be to:

- Enhance public understanding of environmental information generally and the potential risks and hazards of releases of toxic chemicals to their communities as they relate to facilities covered under the Toxic Release Inventory Program;

- Support efforts to assist state, tribal and local governments to improve management of TRI and other toxic chemical information; and
- Identify priorities and opportunities for the public and state, tribal and local governments to work with industry to reduce toxic chemical disposal or other releases and potential risks associated with them.

In accordance with EPA policy for competing cooperative agreements, the Agency is seeking proposals from eligible applicants who have the capability both to support the development, operation and maintenance of a clearinghouse for non-federal organizations on research and analysis related to TRI and other environmental data and to provide outreach and training opportunities to all stakeholders who may want access to TRI and other toxic chemical data. The applicant should be able to demonstrate an ability to help their communities understand TRI data in context of other environmental information.

Activities to be performed under the agreement to be awarded under this RFP include, but are not limited to: providing training to interested stakeholders (such as the annual TRI National Training Conference); developing a clearinghouse for non-federal organizations on research and analysis related to TRI and other environmental data; and providing a mechanism to support other non-federal organizations (such as students at academic institutions) to conduct studies on how to use TRI and other environmental information.

B. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan. Tasks under the project to be awarded through this RFP will support progress towards EPA Strategic Plan Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems, specifically, Objective 4.2 Communities and Objective 4.3. Ecosystems; by promoting Right-to-Know principles through advancement of the Toxics Release Inventory Program. The TRI program makes information available to the public on toxic chemical releases to the environment, thus helping citizens make informed choices about their communities and ecosystems.
2. Outcomes: The anticipated outcomes of the project(s) are ultimately that the community's knowledge about toxic chemicals and involvement will lead to better control of toxic substances. The project(s) to be funded under this announcement are expected to produce at least one, and preferably all, of the following environmental outcomes:
 - a. Encourage facilities and communities to work together to implement pollution prevention practices to reduce overall environmental footprint.
 - b. Enable all interested stakeholders to obtain necessary TRI information that can help them make informed decisions regarding their specific needs.
 - c. Increase in diverse public participation at the TRI National Training Conference.
 - d. Citizens better informed of the potential hazards in their communities.
 - e. Citizens better educated on how to access specific data and trend information.
 - f. Proven increases in the availability of TRI information to new audiences via clearinghouse concepts (Link to TRI from NGO web sites, new clearinghouse sites, participation in new conferences, references to TRI in ads, journals, etc.)
 - g. Increased awareness and better understanding of toxic substances under the Toxic Substance Control Act and the Toxic Release Inventory Program.
 - h. Increased availability of TRI information through studies.
3. Outputs: Expected outputs from the project(s) to be funded under this announcement may include the following:
 - a. Development and implementation of the non-federal segment of the annual TRI National Training Conference
 - b. Number of non-federal attendees at TRI National meetings
 - c. Number of new non-federal stakeholder groups attending TRI National meeting
 - d. Number of established relationships with key non-federal stakeholders
 - e. Number of attendees at TRI training workshops
 - f. Number of TRI related studies conducted.

C. Project Overview

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible entities to determine the most effective means of increasing awareness and providing access to TRI data and other related data for their respective user communities. EPA believes the best way to promote this understanding is to focus on intermediary non-federal organizations to determine the most effective means of increasing awareness and providing access to TRI data and other related data for their respective user communities. Under this RFP, EPA is requesting that eligible applicants submit a proposal that shows how to improve the access, presentation, and use of TRI data and other related data and information to their respective communities. Project activities will include developing and providing logistical support for the annual TRI National Training Conference, developing a clearinghouse for non-federal research and analysis for TRI and other toxic chemicals, and providing a mechanism to support other non-federal organizations to conduct studies on how to use TRI and other toxic chemical information. These activities will also promote and educate non-federal organizations about pollution prevention and the public's right to know about chemical risks and evaluation of chemicals to safeguard all Americans, including children and other vulnerable members of the population.

D. Scope of Work

Types of activities to be covered under proposed projects should include but need not be limited to the following:

I. Capacity Building

- a. Identify non-federal organizations who can demonstrate an effective presentation, dissemination, understanding, and better use of TRI and other toxic chemical data for individual communities;
- b. Develop relationships with non-federal organizations that share common goals relating to control of toxic substance releases to support "Education and Outreach" and "Clearinghouse" efforts.

II. Education and Outreach

- a. Promote non-federal participation at the annual TRI National Training Conference
 - i. Because of the need for cooperation, EPA and the successful applicant will "co-sponsor" The TRI National Training conferences and other forums for all interested non-federal stakeholders so they can stay up to date on the latest TRI regulatory developments, electronic reporting advances, and new data access and analytical tools or other developments. The TRI National Training Conference should continue to be a key communications event between the states, Tribes, and EPA, in addition to the broader involvement of interested non-federal stakeholders. Please see EPA Ethics Advisory 96-15 <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/bestpractice.htm#2iaq> or Best Practices Guide for Conferences (GPI 98-11), Nov. 20, 1998] for details on the Agency's policies for cosponsoring conferences and other events.
 - ii. In addition, the forum(s) can provide opportunities for all interested non-federal TRI stakeholders and data users to exchange information and expertise regarding the use of TRI and other toxic chemical data.
 - iii. EPA funding under this cooperative agreement will cover logistical expenses as well as provide travel scholarships for the TRI National Conference to non-federal speakers, and representative states, environmental justice communities and tribes. EPA will not select recipients of travel scholarships and travel scholarships may not be provided to federal employees.
 - iv. The applicant may impose participant registration fees which will be treated as program income under this agreement.
 - v. In collaboration with EPA on the TRI National Training Conference, the applicant will:

1. Represent the interests of all non-federal organizations in the conference planning, design, and execution of the annual conference. This includes responsibility for determining the substantive issues that will be addressed at the conferences, communications and promotional activities, record keeping, and logistics.
 2. Organize and promote an exhibitor hall for demonstrations of TRI related technology and educating the public about TRI related programs
 - b. Provide other accepted venues to deliver TRI related training to interested non-federal stakeholders
 - i. These training workshops can be newly created or take advantage of existing organizational mechanisms.
 - ii. Training Workshops can be tailored to specific audience groups that have a logical link or potential partnership with the TRI program as listed, but limited to, the groups listed in Section 1.B.
 - iii. Applicants may include on-line training approaches in their proposal.
- III. Clearinghouse
- a. Develop and promote a clearinghouse for non-federal organizations on research and analysis related to TRI and other toxic chemicals so all other non-federal stakeholders can access TRI information and realize how the information and resources can support their individual program goals and objectives.
 - b. The clearinghouse will provide a centralized location that is accessible to the general public and will enable all interested non-federal stakeholders to obtain necessary TRI and other toxic chemical information that can help them make informed decisions regarding their specific needs. EPA encourages the applicant to use state of the art “social networking” capabilities.
 - c. Provide a mechanism to support other non-federal organizations to conduct studies on how to use TRI and other toxic chemical information.
 - d. Create Internet linkages among the various non-federal organizations, organizations that support them, EPA and other federal regulatory agencies, and the compliance assistance provider communities who use TRI and other toxic chemical information.
 - e. Develop appropriate information (such as public health, pollution prevention, analyses, and other key topical areas) that will address the needs of the general public and interested non-federal organizations.
 - f. Use non-federal stakeholder communication channels to promote/disseminate this information on a timely basis to the all interested non-federal organizations
 - g. Provide a mechanism for customer feedback in order to determine if activities developed under this cooperative agreement are useful and effective.

EPA is particularly interested in proposals that address the following:

- A clear description of previous working relationship(s) with experts and national organizations that use and have a better understanding of TRI and other toxic chemical data to prevent pollution, improve environmental performance and reduce the hazards/risks associated with toxic chemical releases, or intends coordinate with other non-federal organizations with such expertise.
- Ability to identify the issues of interested stakeholders regarding the access and use of TRI and other toxic chemical data and how to make it accessible through a TRI clearinghouse.
- A clear multi-year plan for the direction for enhancing and increasing the non-federal organizations' use of TRI and other toxic chemical data.

E. Supplementary Information.

The statutory authority for the award(s) under this RFP is the Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10 which authorizes research, development, monitoring, public education, training, demonstrations, and studies related to the causes, effect, extent, prevention and control of releases of toxic chemicals.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. What is the amount of funding available?

EPA seeks to provide financial assistance to support research, development, monitoring, public education, training, demonstrations, and studies related to the causes, effect, extent, prevention and control of releases of toxic chemicals, up to \$1,000,000 over a five year period. The Agency anticipates funding an initial one year budget period at approximately \$200,000. EPA will partially fund each budget period and will consider funding the balance of budget requests contingent upon satisfactory progress as certified by the EPA Project Officer, the availability of funds and EPA priorities.

B. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates award of one cooperative agreement under this announcement. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of original selection date.

C. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation will begin on June 1, 2008. Proposed project periods may be up to five years.

D. Funding Type

The funding for selected projects will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for this project will be:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- monthly technical discussions to determine if the best direction and sources of information on the latest efficient technologies are being utilized;
- approving substantive terms of proposed contracts;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient);
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient);

EPA will award funds to one eligible applicant as the "recipient" even if other eligible applicants are named as "partners" or "co-applicants" or members of a "coalition" or "consortium." The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal/application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Assistance under this announcement is generally available to states, the District of Columbia, US territories (for example, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands), federally recognized Indian tribes, intertribal consortia of federally recognized tribes, public and private colleges and universities, and other public or private nonprofit organizations. Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive assistance agreements from the EPA under this program.

Non-profit organization, as defined by OMB Circular A-122, located at 2 CFR Part 230, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization which: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations. For this purpose, the term "non-profit organization" excludes (i) colleges and universities; (ii) hospitals; (iii) state, local, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; and (iv) non-profit organizations which are excluded from coverage of this part in accordance with § 230.20(c). Non profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

Federal Agencies may not apply. Federal employees are not eligible to serve in a principal leadership role on an assistance agreement, and may not receive salaries or augment their Agency's appropriations in other ways through awards made under this program.

Potential applicants who are uncertain of their eligibility should contact Peggy Bagnoli at (202) 566-1230 or Bagnoli.Peggy@epa.gov.

B. Cost-Sharing

Although cost-sharing or matching is not required as a condition of eligibility or otherwise for proposals, applicants proposing a voluntary financial or in-kind commitment of resources may improve their scoring under the "Collaboration and Leveraging Resources" evaluation criterion of this solicitation. (Refer to Section V.A.-Evaluation Criteria.)

Voluntary contributions of funds and/or in kind contributions of resources, if accepted by EPA, will be treated as cost shares under 40 CFR 30.24 or 40 CFR 31.24. Applicants must propose eligible and allowable in kind contributions of resources to qualify for an improved score under the--- criterion in Section V. If EPA accepts an applicant's voluntary cost-share that applicant will be obligated to provide the cost-share as a term and condition of the cooperative agreement.

C. Other

Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

In addition, proposals must be received by the EPA through <http://www.grants.gov> (or through any approved alternative means), as specified in Section IV, on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Late proposals will not be reviewed.

In addition, awards made under this solicitation are intended to explore the feasibility of using existing data to develop and evaluate environmental health outcome indicators. Therefore, proposals that propose the collection of new data will be considered to be non-responsive to this announcement and rejected

Proposals deemed ineligible for funding consideration will be notified within fifteen calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain Application Package.

EPA encourages applicants to obtain proposal materials and apply electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>.

To obtain a hard copy of materials, please send an email or written request to the Agency contact listed in Section VII of this announcement.

B. Form of Proposal Submission

Applicants must submit their proposals electronically through the Grants.gov website unless they have received approval from the Agency contact listed in Section VII of this announcement to use an alternative submittal method. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C. below..

The electronic submission of your proposal must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page.

The registration process may take a week or longer to complete. If your organization is not currently registered with <http://www.grants.gov>, please encourage your office to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the proposal submittal process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left side of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions" to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the proposal package for the announcement. To download the PureEdge viewer click on the "PureEdge Viewer" link. Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the proposal package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OEI-(enter solicitation number provided by APT)**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.612), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the "Application" button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Find Grant Opportunities" button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

ATTENTION – Microsoft Vista and Word 2007 Users:

Please note that Grants.gov does not currently support the new Microsoft Vista Operating system. The PureEdge software used by Grants.gov for forms is not compatible with Vista. Grants.gov will be reviewing this new product to determine if it can be supported in the future.

In addition, the new version of Microsoft Word saves documents with the extension .DOCX. The Grants.gov system does not process Microsoft Word documents with the extension .DOCX. When submitting Microsoft Word attachments to Grants.gov, please use the version of Microsoft Word that ends in ".doc."

If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

Grants.gov Proposal Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR (Authorized Representative) must submit your complete proposal package as described below, electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than 11:59 p.m. EST on March 31, 2008

Proposal Materials

The following forms and documents are required to be submitted under this announcement:

- I. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- II. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- III. Narrative Proposal (as described in Section IV.C of the announcement)

The proposal package **must** include all of the following materials:

1. Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

2. Standard Form SF 424A – Budget Information:

Complete the form. There are no attachments.

The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency at a later point in time as instructed by the project officer.

3. Narrative Proposal

The document should be readable in PDF, MS Word or Word Perfect WP6/7/8 for Windows and consolidated into a single file and be prepared in accordance with Section IV.C of the announcement.

Documents I through III listed under Proposal Materials above should appear in the "Mandatory Documents" box on the <http://www.grants.gov> Grant Application Package page.

For documents I and II, click on the appropriate form and then click "Open Form" below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click "Save." When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, "Move Form to Submission List." This action will move the document over to the box that says, "Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission."

For document number III, the Narrative Proposal, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your narrative proposal as described above in Section IV.C. of this announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word, PDF or WordPerfect file. When you are ready to attach your proposal to the application package, click on "Project Narrative Attachment Form," and open the form. Click "Add Mandatory Project Narrative File," and then attach your proposal narrative (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click "View Mandatory Project Narrative

File" to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside "Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;" the file name should be no more than 40 characters long. If there other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click "Add Optional Project Narrative File" and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click "Close Form." When you return to the "Grant Application Package" page, select the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" and click "Move Form to Submission List." The form should now appear in the box that says, "Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission."

Once your proposal package has been completed and saved, send it to your Authorized Representative (AOR) for submission to U.S. EPA through <http://www.grants.gov>. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through <http://www.grants.gov>.

In the "Application Filing Name" box, your AOR should enter your organization's name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g., FY08), and the grant category (e.g., Assoc Prog Supp). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the "Grant Application Package" page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the "Submit" button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>.

Proposal packages submitted thru grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically. Please confirm receipt of your proposal submission with the Agency contact listed in Section VII of this announcement.

C. Content of Proposal Submission

All proposal submissions, regardless of mode of transmission, must contain a completed and signed SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, a completed SF-424A, Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs, and a Narrative Proposal as described below.

Narrative Proposal

The Narrative Proposal (including sections 1-3 below) **cannot** exceed a maximum of 20 single-spaced typewritten pages, including the Summary Page. Pages in excess of 20 will not be considered. Supporting materials, such as resumes and letters of support, can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 20-page limit.

1. Summary Page

- a. Project Title
- b. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
- c. Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA.
- d. Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost share or in-kind resources.
- e. Project period. Provide beginning and ending dates.

2. Narrative Work Plan

The Narrative must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Sections I-III (including the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C) of this announcement, and address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.A below.

- a. Project Summary/Approach: The summary shall contain the following components:
- i. Detailed project summary, description of specific actions and methods to be undertaken and the responsible institutions, including estimated time line for each task.
 - ii. Description of the associated work products to be developed.
 - iii. Explanation of project benefits to the public, and specifically the potential audience(s) served.
 - iv. Description of the roles of the applicant and partners, if any. Please see Section IV.D. for important information regarding the use of EPA funding for partners.
 - v. Description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project.
 - vi. Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.
 - vii. Budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF-424A such as "other" and "contractual."

b. Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the project (See Section I), including what measurements will be used to track your progress towards achieving the expected project outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated. Identify the expected project outputs and how progress towards achieving the expected project outputs will be tracked and measured.

c. Past Performance

- i. Programmatic Capability: Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V.A. – Evaluation Criteria below, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.A below.

- ii. **Reporting on Environmental Results--Outcomes and Outputs:** Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (**assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts**) that **your organization** performed within the last three years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements), and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V.A. – Evaluation Criteria below, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal

agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V.A – Evaluation Criteria below.

3. Detailed Budget Narrative

In addition to the SF 424A, please provide specified total costs of the project.

Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

4. (OPTIONAL) Attachments. These are not included in the 20-page limit.

- a. **Resumes.** Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all principal investigators and any other key personnel.
- b. **Support Letters.** Specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project.
- c. **Copies of Peer-reviewed Articles.** Include copies with full citations of any peer-reviewed publications within the last five year.

D. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable.

EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

E. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, if appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- i. an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.
- ii. an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal/application that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal/application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

F. Submission Dates and Times

Electronic proposal submissions containing the information described in Section IV.C above must be submitted via <http://www.grants.gov> by March 31, 2008, 11:59 p.m., EST (proposal packages submitted through any approved alternative means must also be received by EPA by this time). Proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

A final (full) grant application will be requested only from the eligible entity(ies) whose proposal has been tentatively selected for award. Additional instructions for final application packages will be provided when the applicant is notified of the tentative selection.

G. Confidential Business Information

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

H. Pre-proposal/Application Assistance and Communications.

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications/proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. The Agency will post answers to significant questions regarding this announcement at <http://www.epa.gov/tri>.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria

Only those proposals that meet the threshold criteria in section III will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal submittal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

Criteria	Points
1. <u>Project Summary/Approach:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors: (i) (15 pts) the extent and quality to which the proposal narrative includes a well-conceived strategy for addressing all of the requirements in Section I, Parts C (Project Overview) and Part D (Scope of Work) , (ii) (10 pts) the extent and quality to which the proposal's goals are realistic and will be actually implemented by project end, (iii) (5 pts) whether the proposal sets forth a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project(s) and Part D (Scope of Work) .	30
2. <u>Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs:</u> Extent and quality to which the proposal describes the applicant's approach for measuring and tracking its progress towards achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs, <u>including those</u> identified in Section I .	10
3. <u>Past Performance--Programmatic Capability and Reporting on Environmental Results:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the applicant's technical ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicants: (i) (5 pts) past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years, (ii) (5 pts) history of meeting reporting requirements on federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, and (iii) (5 pts) past performance in documenting and/or reporting on progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) performed within the last 3 years; and, if such progress was not made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not. NOTE: In evaluating applicants under this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or	15

supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance or reporting history will receive a neutral score for those criteria (e.g, 2.5 points for item i)..	
<p>4. Collaboration and Leveraged Resources: Degree to which the project proposes to work in partnership with a diverse set of stakeholders and leverage significant resources to implement the proposal. Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with other entities. Under this criterion, the EPA will also consider the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear description of previous working relationship(s) with experts and national organizations that use and have a better understanding of TRI and other toxic chemical data to prevent pollution, improve environmental performance and reduce the hazards/risks associated with toxic chemical releases, or intends coordinate with other non-federal organizations with such expertise. • Ability to identify the issues of interested stakeholders regarding the access and use of TRI and other toxic chemical data and how to make it accessible through a TRI clearinghouse. • A clear multi-year plan for the direction for enhancing and increasing the non-federal organizations' use of TRI and other toxic chemical data. <p>NOTE: Please refer to Section IV.D and E. "Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services or fund partnerships?"</p>	25
5. Staff Expertise/Qualifications: (i) (5 pts) Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project , (ii) (5 pts) and description of the applicant's organization and experience relating to the proposed project.	10
6. Budget/Resources: (i) (5 pts) Whether the proposed project budget is appropriate to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes, (ii) (5 pts) whether the budget provides an approximation of the percentage of the budget designated for each major activity.	10

B. Review and Selection Process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated by a review team using the evaluation criteria described above. Each eligible proposal will be given a numerical score and will be rank-ordered according to the numerical score. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the Approving Official based on this ranking.

C. Other Factors

Final funding decisions will be made by the Approving Official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendation of the EPA evaluation team. In making the final funding decisions, the Approving Official may also consider programmatic priorities. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA Award Official.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. Award Notices

Following evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

Proposal Notifications

1. EPA anticipates notification to the successful applicant will be made, via telephone, electronic or postal mail by June 1, 2008. The notification will advise the applicant that its Proposal has been successfully evaluated and tentatively recommended for award. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance. The notice shall require submission of a Final Application. (Refer to Section IV(B), Content and form of Application Submission)

This notification, which advises that the applicant's proposal has been recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin performance. The award notice signed by the EPA grants officer is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. At a minimum, this process can take up to 90 days from the date of recommendation.

2. EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail by June 15, 2008. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirement

1. A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at:
http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm.
2. Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs may be applicable to awards, resulting from this announcement. Applicants selected for funding may be required to provide a copy of their proposal to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the Initial Proposal and not all states require such a review.

C. DUNS Number

All applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for a Federal grant or cooperative agreement. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at: <http://www.dnb.com>.

D. Reporting Requirement

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. Quarterly reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities for next quarter and summary of expenditures are required. The final report shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final report should include: summary of the project or activity, advances achieved and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final report shall discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of quarterly reports will be established by EPA, after award.

E. Exchange Network

EPA, states, territories, and tribes are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network, a secure, Internet- and standards-based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data. States, tribes and territories exchanging data with each other or with EPA, should make the Exchange Network and the Agency's connection to it, the Central Data Exchange (CDX), the standard way they exchange data and should phase out any legacy methods they have been using. More information on the Exchange Network is available at <http://www.exchangenetwork.net>.

F. Disputes

Assistant agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2006) located on the web at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getpage.cgi?position=all&page=3629&dbname=2005_register.

G. Non-profit Administrative Capability

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may be required, depending on the size of the award, to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form, with supporting documents, contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For further information contact,

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: Peggy Bagnoli (Mail Code: 2844T)
OEI, EPA West Building, Rm 5329F
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460
Phone: (202) 566-1230

Section VIII - Other Information.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and make no award as a result of this announcement. The EPA Grant Award Officer is the only official that can bind the Agency to the expenditure of funds for selected projects resulting from this announcement.